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[Dept. of Oriental Languages + Literature,
Princeton University,
Princeton, NJ]

120 FITZ RANDOLPH ROAD
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

April 5th, 1933.

Dr. E. T. Newell,
American Numismatic Society,
156th Street and Broadway,
New York City

Dear Doctor Newell:

I have charge of the etymologies in an English dictionary, and I have been trying to find the exact origin (superficially it is clear) of the word mahmudi, as the name of a coin, as you can see from the inclosed slips without much success. The question is after what Mahmud the coin was named. If you can tell me I should be very grateful indeed.

Please do not write on the inclosed slips, but return them with your reply.

Sincerely yours,

HHB:R

Harold H. Bender

May 17, 1933.

Prof. Harold H. Bender
120 Fitz Randolph Road
Princeton, New Jersey.

Dear Prof. Bender:

Your letter to Mr. Newell was turned over to me only the other day, as he has been away. I have spent all the morning looking up the word "Mahmudi". There are plenty of references to the piece, especially in Persian numismatics but all of the references refer to the value or exchange value of the coin and with but one exception I find nothing authentic that gives its etymology. I, however, can say this; naturally the term comes from some ruler named Mahmud or possibly Mohammad. There were many such rulers in the Mohammedan world, easily forty or fifty. As the name was used at Basra, Oman and other places in Arabia, Persia extensively, parts of India and especially at Gujerat, I am of the opinion that the name originated independently in several places at different times. I can find no reference that it was used at the time or referring to Mahmud of Ghazni. This does not mean it was not used then. Most of the Mahmud coins were known as temini, due to a word on many of his coins. Chardin and Tavernier knew of the Mahmudi as being a Persian coin which weighed about 36 grains. Several modern writers seem to think the name was derived from Mohamat Khudabanda who ruled from 1578 to 1587 and as this was before the time of the two travelers above mentioned this might be so.

The Gujerati coins known as Mahmudi surely must have been named after the famous Sultan Mahmud 1458-1511. The only direct reference I have is published in the *Materiaux Pour Servir a l'Histoire La Numismatique et de la Metrologie Musulmanes, Traduits ou Recueillis et Mis en Ordre par M. H. Sauvage, Paris, 1882, from the Journal Asiatique.* On page 218 under the heading of "Mahmoudiyah: "En 781 (1379-1380) furent introduits les dirhems mahmoudys, qui occasionnerent beaucoup de maux. Cela arriva du temps qu'Aldhaher Barkok etait emire, avant qu'il fut monte sur le trone. Quand Barkok, devenu sultan, eut donne a l'emir Mahmoud ben-Ali la charge d'ostadar, celui-ci fit fabriquer une grande quantite de fels (ou monnaies de cuivre), et fit cesser la fabrication des dirhems. Ces especes devinrent si rares qu'elles ne furent plus considerees que comme une sorte de bijoux. (Maqr. de Sacy, Tr. des monn. mus., p. 45-46; ms. 1938, fol. 44 r^e.) This I feel refers to just certain coins used in Egypt and that this name was not carried on into Persia.

Very truly yours,

120 FITZ RANDOLPH ROAD
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

May 23rd, 1933.

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator
American Numismatic Society,
Broadway near 155th Street,
New York City

Dear Mr. Wood:

I am tremendously grateful to you for your letter of May 17th and for all the time and attention that you gave to the word and coin mahmudi. I did not intend to impose such a burden on you and Mr. Newell, but we could not work out the situation from language alone. Your letter says, I think, all that can be said, and from it we shall evolve an etymology to fit the demonstrable facts. Thank you ever so much.

Sincerely yours,

HHB:R

Harold H. Bender